

THE GRANITE NEWS



The Granite News - serving the communities of Caveat, Highlands, Hughes Creek, Ruffy, Tarcombe, Terip Terip & Whiteheads Creek.



10th December 2023 | Volume 17 Issue 412

Welcome, Wumindjika & G'day

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas when the local mystery elf adorns all the letterboxes along the Old Highlands Rd with Christmas trimmings!



And this year not one, but two, Christmas trees have sprouted out of the rocks on the Ghin Ghin Cutting - see photo below.

Every year these thoughtful festive decorations remind us that another year is almost over and that the time for 'Peace and Goodwill' amongst all is fast approaching. Sady this year those sentiments seem to be in short supply in places like Gaza and the Ukraine and Burma (Myanmar) to name just a few international locations.

Hopefully, closer to home, we can enjoy the festive season with family and friends and share that spirit of goodwill and peace amongst ourselves.

The celebrations have certainly started with the Ruffy community kicking off the season on Friday 1st December and the Highlands community partying last Friday night & by all accounts an excellent time was had by all at both venues. (See articles on p.4 & p.8)

As the Granite News year comes to the end of its 17th year of publication it would be remiss of me not to thank Alistair, Darryl and Nick for their monthly rainfall tallies, as well as TGN's regular correspondents who send in an eclectic mix of articles, fliers, diary dates, photos of the local wildlife and Letters to the Editor.

Thanks also to those wonderful individuals and businesses who financially support this great little epistle by purchasing an ad on the back page, your continued support is most appreciated.

Finally - best wishes to all TGN readers for an excellent festive season and a happy, healthy and hassle-free 2014.

Please read on for another interesting issue, Pauline And Kenny? Was getting up close and personal with Redwoods.

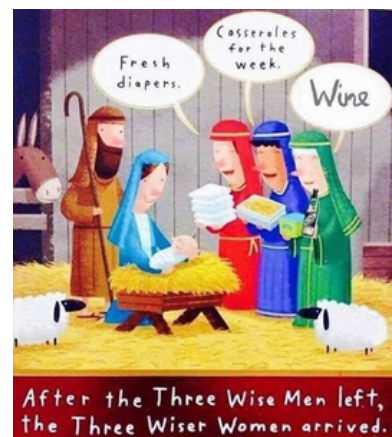
Feedback? editor@tgn.org.au
or to subscribe on-line go to
www.highlands.org.au

The Granite News is an open but moderated community forum. Readers are encouraged to contribute articles and we also encourage you to air your views on things that interest or concern you within our community. We certainly welcome feedback from you, positive or otherwise on anything that is published in The Granite News

"In our hands now lies not only our own future, but that of all living creatures with whom we share the Earth."

Sir David Attenborough

(1926 ... and still going strong)



	NB: Fully vaccinated attendees are appreciated at all events.	What's On - December 2023 & January 2024
	Sun 10th Dec.	LAST GRANITE NEWS for 2023 - back in your inboxes on Sunday 14th Jan. 2024
Details? last TGN	Mon. 11th Dec. @ 1pm	RUFFY VEGGIE CLUB TOUR to Edible Forest in Dixon's Creek - bookings a must!
	Tues. 12th Dec. @ 12.30	HIGHLANDS SPINNING CLUB - Christmas Party @ Grand Central Hotel, Yea Partners or friends are welcome. Would attendees PLEASE ring Andrea 0417 369 225 as soon as possible so we know how many to book for. Meals to be paid for individually..
NB NEW Venue - Grand Central Hotel		
	Thursday 28th Dec. @ 5.30	SECRET MEN'S BUSINESS @ Caveat Church All people in the district are welcome, pink note (\$5) donation towards BBQ, BYO & chat.
NB No December meeting - See you on Jan 25th		
	Friday 29th Dec. 6-8pm	HIGHLANDS BOOK CLUB @ Highlands Community Hall All welcome, BYO plate to share & preferred beverage. Gold coin donation. Sam Neill's book of memoirs - Did I ever tell you this? is up for discussion. Robyn 0409 528235
	Sat 6th & Sun. 7th Jan 10-4	DARREN GIBLERT'S OPEN STUDIO @ 5 Gifford St, Yea Open first weekend each month - discover some stunning artwork.
	Friday 12th Jan. @ 6.30pm	DRINKS on the DECK @ Highlands Community Hall Starts @ 6.30pm, bring food to share and catch up with friends old and new. All welcome, especially new faces. Gold coin donation to cover power. Contact Paula 0419 551882
	Every Second Wednesday 10-30-12.30	MURRINDINDI MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE @ Highlands Community Hall The Mobile Library visits the TGN area, based at the Highlands Hall every fortnight. Why not pop in? Forthcoming dates are 20th December and 3rd & 17th January.
	1st & 3rd Tuesdays 10-12 and 1-3	TABLELANDS KIDS' PLAY GROUP @ TCC, 27 Nolans Rd, Ruffy All ages welcome - Nature play - Playground - Toys - Friends - 19th Dec. 2nd & 16th Jan DIGITAL & ON-LINE LEARNING @ TCC, 27 Nolans Rd, Ruffy 19th Dec. & 2nd & 16th Jan. Enquiries? Bob - 0480 348788
	2nd & 4th Sundays	ST DAVID'S UNITING CHURCH - TERIP RUFFY 2nd Sunday 11.15am Pastor Scott Leslie / 4th Sunday 11am Morning tea & Study group
	Every Tues. & Fri. 8.45-9.45	CUSTOM YOGA is BACK with Ingrid at the Tablelands Community Centre \$20 per hour long class BYO mat and blanket Enquiries? Ingrid ingstar.7@gmail.com

DON'T FORGET - TGN will be taking its usual summer break of 4 weeks before recommencing on **January 14th 2024**.

So if you have any news, ads, diary dates, etc that you need to let TGN readers know about for early next year best email them ASAP for inclusion in the FIRST issue of 2024!

Gliders in Seymour: a message from Seymour College's students

Our Landcare project "Biolink corridors for Gliders in Seymour" concluded on the first weekend of December. Here's a message from the students that have been involved in the project by building the nest boxes:

"Seymour College's Vocational Major students were approached by Seymour Urban Landcare to construct nesting boxes to help improve the Squirrel Glider population, as they are listed as endangered in our area.

Students helped plan the project by organising the parts, cutting and creating zero waste with the materials. The plywood was donated by Bunnings, due to the nature of the project. Each nesting box consisted of four sides, a removable base and a thick hinged lid that provides thermal insulation, all of which are weather resistant. The next stage was to waterproof and paint a camouflage design on each part, bringing all the pieces together to assemble them.

On Friday the 1st of December 2023 Travis and Elise Davies from Underline Tree Clearing, with the assistance of Luke Sefton, very generously volunteered their time to assist the VM students in installing the nesting boxes at Whiteheads Creek in Seymour (on Goulburn Valley Water's pump sites and private land). The boxes will be tracked and monitored by both VM students and Seymour Urban Landcare to see if they are being used.

VM students really enjoyed this project from being directly contacted by an outside group, to planning and constructing and then organising the installation."

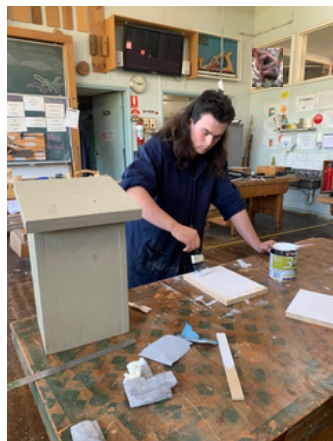
Lisa Macheras, Year 12 VCE - VM Program Manager

Next year we will keep collaborating with Seymour College and hopefully expand to St Mary's College, where we already have a great connection with one of their Science Teachers.

Many thanks to all those that came along to our events and to our project partners for their support all along the way.

Vanessa Malandrin - HCCC Project Co-ordinator

This project is funded by the Victorian Government through the Environmental Volunteering New Growth Project.



Highlands End-of-Year Family Get-together - a GREAT night for all

Saturday 9th December saw a happy community crowd celebrating the end of 2023 at the Highlands Hall. A great time was had by all, and the new community BBQ had its first work-out with Les as the master chef.



A Time for celebration and cake!

Recently, Hanna Finlay (the current treasurer of the Highlands Hall Committee) married Steve McCutcheon on their property in Highlands. Hanna writes....

"We were married on 14th October at our home in Highlands, and we were so lucky to have caught the one day that it didn't rain!

A very special thanks to Judy and Stuart for letting us girls use their home to get ready, and to Netta for making an incredible wedding cake for us.

The boys arrived by quad bike in full camo gear, only to strip the camo off and be dressed in their wedding best, with lots of laughs 🤔

Such a fun night with a small crowd of close friends and family."



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

To ensure the efficient roll out of renewables in Victoria, Renewable Energy Zones (REZs) have been defined. In respect to wind turbines these are to be focused where the wind is consistently strong and reliable along the coast and off shore. They also utilise existing transmission line corridors, include South Gippsland which is close to the existing infrastructure of the Latrobe Valley, and the existing Western District transmission line corridor. Other areas include pumped hydro in the northeast and solar in the north and northeast of the state.

It should be noted that the Southern Strathbogies are **not** in a Renewable Energy Zone for sensible reasons.

Lengthy transmission lines will be required to be constructed down the escarpment to the existing transmission lines near Alexandra/Molesworth through forest known to be prime habitat for the threatened Greater Glider.

More recently an alternative route has been suggested by the wind farm developer to connect with the existing transmission lines at South Morang an outer suburb of Melbourne. How can this project be financially viable if this route is even being considered?

I would encourage readers to make submissions to the VicGrid - Victorian Transmission Plan supporting the Renewable Energy Zones and to tighten the controls to avoid speculative proposals for windfarms outside the Renewable Energy Zones such as the Southern Strathbogies.

Submissions are due by the 31st January 2024.

John Curtis
Highlands.



PS. As I pen his letter outside my window 3 magnificent wedge tailed eagles circle on the updraughts of the beautiful Stewart's Creek/Kobyboyn Valley above a proposed turbine site hovering at the level of the proposed turbine blades.

Hay for sale – Terip Terip

Three types available
Tall Fescue, Phalaris and
Ryegrass base.

Call Donald Coles
0408 333 028

**Seymour
Agricultural &
Pastoral Society**

SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are invited for a 12 month scholarship of \$5000 for young people aged 17-25 years in the Seymour region studying or planning to study in any agricultural or sustainable resource management field at a tertiary level.

Other areas of study which will benefit the rural community will be considered.

Applications close:
Tuesday, January 17, 2024.

Seymour A&P Society Scholarship
PO Box 6, Seymour, VIC, 3661
or phone 0438 577 126 or 0428 969 255
Or email applications to:
jldalziel12@bigpond.com

It's time to spray!

NOW is the time to hit blackberries and ensure that they cannot fruit early next year or spread even further.

The HCCC has spray units available to do just that.

Call either Justus 0427 524473
or Neil 0417 503472
to book a time & get spraying!



TO: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS

LEARN ESSENTIAL FIRST AID SKILLS



BE PREPARED FOR ANY EMERGENCY SITUATION.

Through a Community Strengthening grant the Tablelands Community Centre
have 16 free places available with

StJohn Ambulance to run their HLTAID11 Provide first aid - Full Program
Normal cost over \$200 per person

Register your interest now!

Call us at 0427 690 970 for inquiries.

This course will run at a date to be set when course numbers are full

Tablelands Community Centre 27 Nolans Road Ruffy

What's on over the festive season at the Tablelands Community Centre

Yoga 8:45am - 9:45am
12th & 15th December 2023
19th & 22nd December 2023
9th & 12th January 2024
Ingrid 0456 720 498

Digital Essentials 1pm - 3pm
9th & 23rd January 2024
Bob 0480 348 788

First Friday BBQ 6pm
5th January 2024
2nd February 2024

Table Tennis Mondays 7pm
5th February 2024

Street Library Anytime

More Info
27 Nolans Road Ruffy
tccruffy@gmail.com 0427 690 970

Great turn out for the Annual Community Christmas Party

The chilly night did not deter a large crowd gathering for the Annual Community Christmas Party held at the Tablelands Community Centre in Ruffy.

As usual a superb feast with delicious salads and desserts was enjoyed by all.

The highlight was Santa's arrival on the Ruffy CFA tanker, laden with gifts and assisted by his helpful elf. In addition to Santa the children enjoyed the jumping castle, table tennis, cricket, and the playground.

A special thank you to the Strathbogie Shire for the sponsorship of our waste wise event providing financial support and supplying and emptying bins. We would struggle to keep this annual event going without this support.

A huge thank you to the many volunteers before the event preparing the grounds and Ruffy CFA setting up and packing up, the cooks, music, and to everybody attending keeping the night running smoothly. Also, to all those in our community that keep up current certificates in First Aid, Food Safety and Working with Children.

A wonderful night. Thank you all.

The Christmas decorations will be up till the end of December if you would like to see a little Christmas light cheer.

Tablelands Community Centre
27 Nolans road Ruffy



Strathbogie
SHIRE COUNCIL

Tablelands Community Centre

Street Library

second hand books
the shelves are full, new titles

27 Nolans Road Ruffy

Free donate, borrow, swap or take

Given FERA's plans for a local windfarm the following may be of interest to HCCC area readers...

VicGrid are asking for input to the Victorian Transmission Plan via an online survey and an interactive mapping tool. Have your say about the development of Renewable Energy Zones and the Victorian Transmission Plan by completing the survey and then mark on the map the places in your local area that you feel are important.

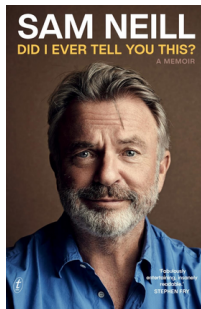
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan>

See p.11 for further information.

HIGHLANDS BOOK GROUP

The next meeting of the Highlands Book Group will be at the Highlands Hall on **Friday 29th December** (in that weird week between Christmas and New Year when we've finished celebrating the festive season and are waiting for the next year to arrive).

So why not come along and enjoy some great company and lively discussion about actor and vigneron, Sam Neill's new book - **'Did I ever tell you this?'**



CONGRATULATIONS and THANKS

The HCCC would like to thank all those readers who responded to the survey for future directions of the HCCC.

Your input was invaluable and most appreciated.

Tim Andrews from Terip was the lucky winner of the \$100 voucher from the Euroa Arboretum and he can't wait to get planting out his grassland.

EUROA ARBORETUM NEWS

While the nursery closed for the year on Thursday 16th November, rest assured they are still working away! Volunteers are always welcome to assist with seed or nursery work.

We will be back again in March 2024 for fresh plants in the nursery, or you can catch us for last minute plants at the Euroa Farmers Market every 3rd Saturday of the month.

To place plant orders for 2024 - <http://euroaarboretum.com.au/plant-order-form/>



Are you interested in adding to the **iNaturalist's** environmental knowledge base of the local HCCC area?

If **YES** then download the App now, follow the instructions for use in **TGN 30/7/23**, and start recording our unique natural wonders of both fauna and flora. It's an incredibly valuable resource.



Know Your Weeds

Thistle - Nodding (Carduus nutans)

State Prohibited Weed

Yet another thistle that likes to spread by a variety of methods - by water, cultivation, seed or plant pieces and vehicles/machinery - forming dense, unpalatable stands that compete with pastures.

It grows to 1.6m tall annually with flowers that come in a variety of colours - pink, red, purple and occasionally white. These occur at the end of each branch and flower between spring and summer.

Its leaves are green, rosette in shape and about 50cm long with spikes around the margins. Stem leaves are smaller and deeply toothed.

The best time to eradicate this weed is September through to December and as a State prohibited weed eradication is done by DEECA - www.deeca.vic.gov.au



For further information re eradication email - info@hccclandcare.net.au

Ways that grassfires can start

Extended periods of dry, hot temperatures with a lack of rainfall can make grassfires more likely. But this alone, cannot start a grassfire. That is why it's important to understand what can start a grassfire.

Motor vehicles and grassfires

Motor vehicles, especially those with hot exhaust systems, pose a risk of starting grassfires when driving through dry grass. The CFA advises to avoid pulling over onto grassy areas during the Fire Danger Period.

A smoldering cigarette

A cigarette dropped on the grass or thrown out a vehicle window is extremely likely to start a grassfire in very dry conditions. It is vital to fully extinguish cigarettes properly and dispose of them safely.

Embers from barbeques or campfires

Campfires often produce flying embers, so it is important to properly extinguish them to help reduce the likelihood of embers igniting surrounding grass. Barbeques can also retain heat after use and should never be left unattended until they have completely cooled off.

Glass bottles

Glass bottles magnify the sun and can create a spark when left on or near very dry, long grass. Glass bottles should always be cleared out and disposed of correctly.

How grassfires behave

Understanding how fire behaves can help to manage grassfires more efficiently. Grassfires can start anywhere, including near urban areas. Therefore, it will help to be prepared and aware of the risks.

Weather influence and wind direction

Weather conditions, particularly wind and humidity, often have a significant impact on grassfire behavior. Low humidity and high winds can exacerbate the grassfire's spread. Grassfires are often more prevalent during dry seasons or droughts when vegetation is parched and more susceptible to ignition. When the wind changes direction, it can influence the size of the fire front making it larger.

Fire behaviour

Grassfires can produce spot fires, where embers or burning debris are carried by the wind and ignite new fires ahead of the main front. They typically burn close to the ground, primarily consuming surface vegetation.

The intensity can vary depending on factors like fuel load, like the length and moisture content of the grass, and wind speed. The terrain also plays a part in the spread and intensity as fire tends to move faster uphill as the flames catch on to taller grass in front of the fire.

Grassfires produce radiant heat which pre-heats the grass in front of the fire, making it even more flammable. This means they often burn quickly compared to bushfires, as they primarily consume fine fuels on the ground.

Smoke and visibility

Grassfires can produce significant smoke, reducing visibility and air quality. This can pose health risks and make firefighting efforts more challenging.

Developing the first Victorian Transmission Plan

Help us plan Victoria's future reliable, affordable and renewable energy grid.

OPEN FOR FEEDBACK - CLOSING 31 JANUARY 2024

Overview

Victoria is undergoing a transition to renewable energy.



As our ageing and increasingly unreliable coal-fired power stations retire and are replaced by renewables, our electricity grid needs to evolve. New transmission infrastructure will be critical to moving high volumes of energy from the new areas where it is generated, to homes and businesses where it will be used.

The Victorian Government has established VicGrid to plan future major electricity transmission infrastructure and coordinate the state's Renewable Energy Zones (REZs), the areas with the greatest potential for renewable energy development.

VicGrid is leading reforms to how we plan future transmission and Renewable Energy Zones to ensure that cheaper, more reliable renewable energy can be delivered to homes and businesses across the state.

As part of the reforms, VicGrid will develop the first statewide Victorian Transmission Plan by mid-2025.

An important step in building the Victorian Transmission Plan is to identify 'Renewable Energy Zone Priority Areas'. These are geographical areas that could be appropriate for energy generation, storage and transmission. Once we know the Priority Areas for renewable energy generation we will work with communities to investigate where possible transmission could go.

Community needs to be at the heart of our planning process.

As we start, VicGrid is asking Victorians, and particularly those living in regional communities, to share your views towards renewable energy and transmission development, as well as your local knowledge about your region and values important to you.

How to participate

Learn more in the helpful documents section (on Website) or RSVP to attend a webinar on 30 November

Complete the Renewable Energy Planning Survey (on website) so we can understand more about your views towards renewable energy and transmission development.

Use the interactive map to show us important land uses in your area.

<https://engage.vic.gov.au/project/victransmissionplan/survey/4576#sub-nav>

Join us in March 2024 at a workshop or drop-in near you to discuss what we have heard. Register your interest to attend - see Website.

The survey and interactive map will close at 12.01am on Wednesday 31 January 2024. You will still be able to engage with us and provide input at workshops and drop-ins in March 2024.

Note: Consultation is already underway in some parts of Victoria for some critical near-term transmission projects. This Land Assessment is statewide and will be an input to the first Victorian Transmission Plan. Where possible, information recently gathered by VicGrid from community, landholders and Traditional Owners for Offshore Wind transmission in Gippsland and Portland will be reflected in this assessment.

WEBSITE - <https://engage.vic.gov.au/victransmissionplan>

<p>HABBIES HOWE BEEF</p> <p>MATURE, WELL HUNG & AVAILABLE</p> <p>IGA SEYMOUR GARY'S MEATS, PRAHRAN MARKET L&L MEATS, BENTLEIGH</p> <p>SCOTCH AND FILLET ST HELENA, MENTONE & MERNDA</p>	<p>Donated by supporters of the endangered Hairy Hop bush</p> 	<p>Chris Sharman</p> <p>Energy Efficiency & Solar Energy Specialist</p> <p>Acme – Air Conditioning Electrical Solar</p> <p>M: 0418 551 301 T: Office - 9785 7339 E: chris@acmeair.com.au</p>	 <p>Darren Gilbert open studio</p> <p>@ 5 Giffard Street Yea</p> <p>Open every first weekend of the month Up to date Open Studio days & times on www.monkeytaildesign.com</p>
<p>The Pond Professor Peter Graf</p> <p>DESIGNS, CREATES & MAINTAINS BEAUTIFUL PONDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pond cleaning • Filtration systems • Fountains and waterfalls • Native fish and plants • Algae control • Water testing • Design and construction • Consulting services <p>Phone: 0429 969 243 Email: info@pondprofessor.com.au http://www.pondprofessor.com.au</p>	 <p>SEYMOUR EQUINE & RURAL</p> <p>Supplying everything you need</p> <p>Products & Expertise in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animal Production - Pasture/Crop Protection - Fencing & Livestock Handling <p>PH: (03) 5792 1088 HELPING YOU GROW</p>	<p>Little Antechinus living in a hollow near you</p> 	<p>BenCo</p> <p>PLUMBING SERVICES</p> <p>Ben Laycock</p> <p>0438 512299 Licence no. 105134</p> <p>ben@bencoplumbingservices.com.au bencoplumbingservices.com</p>
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 <p>Murrindindi Shire Council</p> <p>Cr John Walsh Koriella Ward Murrindindi Shire Council jwalsh@murrindindi.vic.gov.au 0437 835 586</p>	<p>Tablelands Community Centre</p> <p>Upgraded facilities & playground Ideal for Private or Community gatherings Meetings, Workshops Very reasonable rates Hosts 1st Friday BBQs Contact tccruffy@gmail.com Ph 0404 833 388</p>	 <p>For All your Aerial Spraying or Spreading Needs. Specialising in Blackberries, Broadleaf, Thistles, Spreading lime/fertilizer & More</p> <p>Call 0484108854 48 Magills Lane Maindample 3723</p> 	<p>Donated by supporters of our local koala population</p> 
<p>Donation from supporters of the Eastern Small-eyed Snake</p> 	<p>HIGHLANDS GROVE</p> <p>Australian, family owned local producers of premium cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, made for your goodness and enjoyment.</p> <p>0417 018 070 enquiries@highlandsgrove.com.au highlandsgrove.com.au</p>	 <p>HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY HALL</p> <p>Meeting Room and/or Hall available for hire</p> <p>MEETINGS FUNCTIONS WORKSHOPS PARTIES WEDDINGS</p> <p>Reasonable Rates Contact Paula Lade 0419 551 882</p>	<p>Donated by friends of the Long Leafed Box Trees</p> 
<p>Echidnas take care of their habitat</p> 	<p>Granite Hills Community Nursery</p>  <p>www.granitehillsnursery.com.au</p>	<p>Need a website? bluetopbiz.com.au</p> <p>Affordable web design & maintenance. Presentations, marketing copy. Grant applications, project management. Call</p> <p>Sue 0411 010 379 Neil 0417 503 472</p> <p>Email: sue@bluetopbiz.com.au</p>	 <p>Strathbogie Granite Project neil.phillips@bigpond.com</p>



The Granite News is usually created on the lands of the Taungurung clans - First people of the Rivers and Mountains.

We thank the Taungurung ancestors and elders who, for millennia, have cared for this country on which we now live, work, play and grow.

May the current generations of Taungurung, HCCC residents & landowners continue this important custodianship into the future.